



## Transportation Advisory Committee

Date: October 14, 2020

Time: 7:00 PM – 9:30 PM

Location: Conducted via Remote Participation (Zoom)

### Minutes

#### 1. Administration

Members in Attendance: Michael Barry, Bill Copithorne (for Wayne Chouinard), Lenard Diggins, Ray Jones, Melissa Laube, Jeff Maxtutis, Howard Muise, Tycho Nightingale, Corey Rateau, Scott Smith, Laura Swan, and Shoji Takahashi

Members Missing: Dan Amstutz, Wayne Chouinard

Members of Public in Attendance: Linda Epstein, Caroline James, Jo Anne Preston, Paul Schlichtman, Joe Solomon, and several others.

The Chair read the script for remotely conducted meetings, referred the members to the agenda attachment entitled “Governor Charles Baker’s 3/12/2020 Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law,” announced that the meeting was being recorded and reviewed the meeting ground rules.

The minutes of the September 9, 2020 meeting were approved on a roll call vote.

The Chair noted that correspondence had been received from Paul Schlichtman regarding improvements for Chestnut Street.

Aravind Basavapathruni resigned from the TAC.

The November meeting will take place on Tuesday November 10, 2020, as Wednesday is Veterans Day.

#### 2 Public Comments

There were no public comments.

#### 3 Town Issues/Activities

A Bill Copithorne provided an update from the Department of Public Works (DPW):

The Arlington Center sidewalk project will be finishing in the next two weeks.

Lake Street and Minuteman Bikeway crossing will be substantially completed by the end of October.

Curb and sidewalk work will be conducted on Sunnyside Ave. Lenard Diggins asked for additional information. Bill Copithorne responded that there are accessibility challenges due to Norway maple tree roots disturbing the sidewalks. Dead and diseased Norway maple trees will be removed. Curbing will be installed where none exist, and sidewalks will be replaced. Presently investigating potential bump out near an existing healthy tree, which might entail reducing parking near the bump out.

Road Rehabilitation Project on Bacon St and Central St has started. Pavement markings are being refreshed on Mass Ave, Lake St, Lowell St, and Westminster Ave. Scott Smith commented that Lake St lane markings are good.

Planning for 2021 road repairs has begun, which will include Summer St (between Grove and Mill St). Grove St repairs will be coordinated with the reconstruction of the DPW Facility.

In coordination with the Police Department, crash data for intersection of Appleton St and Mass Ave (between Lowell St and Forest St/Burton St) was submitted to a consultant. Tycho Nightingale asked for additional information. Bill Copithorne responded that the Town is seeking short-term solution for safe intersection and data for long-term solution.

Linda Epstein inquired about the Appleton St/Mass Ave Working Group. Lenard Diggins responded that he discussed it with the Town Manager earlier in the week, and the Working Group has not yet convened.

**B     Corey Rateau provided an update from the Police Department.**

Parking enforcement will restart on November 2. A new addition to the system will allow users to pay for parking through a Pay-By-Phone touch-free system. Training of staff and final adjustments to the system are being conducted. Parking signs in Arlington Center are being installed to indicate the zones for Pay-by-Phone and parking rates.

Parking meters have been installed on Broadway between Franklin and Webster streets.

Meetings with crossing guards and supervisors were held as school has started.

Also APD provided assistance with parklets on Medford St, Park Terrace, and Alton St. Howard Muise asked when the parklets will be dismantled. Corey responded that parklets will remain in place until approximately mid-November or early December. DPW's concern is water-filled barrels used to construct the parklets may cause hazardous conditions as temperatures drop below freezing.

**C     Howard Muise provided an update from the Department of Planning and Community Development.**

Mary St Shared Streets Project, funded by Mass DOT, is now open. Bill Copithorne asked for additional information. Howard Muise responded that it is a trial intended to check whether traffic calming measures would increase safety and reduce cut-through traffic from Lake St. Lenard Diggins added that a goal is to make certain shared streets more accessible and to reduce vehicular speeds.

Corey Rateau added that he is collecting data from road tube counters including volume, speed, gap, and class. Bill Copithorne and Scott Smith added that traffic counts during the pandemic might not be informative.

The fifth Bluebikes station is open at Magnolia Park. The sixth Bluebikes station will open next season because of the delay in completing the Arlington Center sidewalk project.

The automated bike counter on the Minuteman Bikeway near Swan St was repaired and is now acquiring data.

**4     Vote: \$500 for Pedestrian Flags**

Jeff Maxtutis provided background on pedestrian flags in Arlington, which started about ten years ago. Presently, there are ten locations throughout the Town providing an enhancement for pedestrian crossings. Each location has eight to ten flags, which are replenished at regular intervals. The project began with 400 flags and is down to the last 80 flags. Additional flags will need to-be purchased to continue the program at approximately \$1.25 per flag. Corey Rateau added that Police Department has a contract with the supplier, and he will coordinate with Laura Swan on purchasing.

Motion to approve purchase of additional flags for \$500 was passed unanimously.

## 5 Discussion: Chestnut St. Traffic Calming

The Select Board has asked the TAC to consider traffic calming improvements to Chestnut St. Jeff Maxtutis presented ideas in a Draft Memo by Jeff Maxtutis, Howard Muise, and Dan Amstutz on Potential Chestnut St Improvements. He discussed pedestrian activity in the local area. Notably, there is a desire for people to cross Chestnut St to reach St. Agnes Church and various locations in Arlington Center and St. A fatal pedestrian crash in the crosswalk at Chestnut Terr. demonstrated a need to enhance crossing safety. Jeff also noted that there are many bicycle riders who use Chestnut St.

Potential near-term and long-term solutions were presented with diagrams to illustrate possible modifications to Chestnut St. to enhance pedestrian safety. In the near-term, the Town can enhance signage, pavement markings, and install pedestrian flags at the crosswalk. In the long-term, the 50' roadway width provides an opportunity for narrower travel lanes, bicycle lanes, additional curbside parking, bump outs, and flashing beacons.

It was also noted that the Town might want to consider establishing a 20-mph speed safety zone as the area is proximate to a church, two schools and an elderly population. Additionally, the south-side sidewalk across the Russell Common Lot is in disrepair making accessibility a concern. The Town will need to discuss the project parts with stakeholders and may want to consider a Shared Streets Pilot Program to fund trial solutions.

Paul Schlichtman praised the TAC Draft Memo. He had earlier submitted a letter to the TAC in which he discussed ideas on Chestnut St. In the near-term. He inquired about removing the No Parking signs and replacing them with 4-hour Parking signs as the presence of parked vehicles would narrow the roadway and presumably slow vehicular traffic. He noted that the Arlington Center parking study provides 4-hour parking on Chestnut St near Chestnut Terrace.

Paul also requested traffic enforcement of right-turning vehicles from Chestnut St onto Mystic St. and from Mystic St. to Chestnut St. He observes that drivers operate from the slip lanes as though the red light is a yield sign, endangering pedestrians crossing Chestnut St. at Mystic St.. He agreed that a 20-mph speed zone is appropriate for the street. In the long-term, he thinks the exit from Russell Parking Lot should be aligned with Chestnut Terrace for safety.

Scott Smith added that he likes the concepts presented. He emphasized that, in the longer term, tighter turning radii at Mystic St. is important to reduce vehicular speeds. He concurs that the crosswalk at Chestnut Terr. has poor visibility, and pedestrian flags would help. He also suggested considering a pedestrian refuge island and reviewing the

lighting of the area. Paul Schlichtman added that two flat panel lights near Chestnut and Medford streets presently cause glare and need to be re-aimed.

Although the Town maintains Chestnut St, Corey Rateau recommended communicating with Mass DOT as the street is a numbered route and designated truck route. Howard Muise noted the importance of discussing possible changes with Mass DOT.

Jo Anne Preston expressed gratitude for the progress on Chestnut St plans. She added that seniors in the area, such as those living in Chestnut Manor, must cross Chestnut St and expressed concern about them doing so. She observed that trucks travel at high speeds through the area and requested traffic data for Chestnut St/Medford St (all the way to Maynard and Parallel streets). She also inquired about the timeframe and funding for the project improvements.

Howard Muise responded that the TAC will try to move as quickly as possible. In the near term, new funding is likely not necessary. For long-term changes, funding sources will need to-be identified and secured for permanent infrastructure costs. Jeff Maxtutis added that Arlington is part of the Complete Streets Program through Mass DOT and asked whether funding could be found through the Complete Streets Program. Dan Amstutz and Wayne Chouinard will contact Mass DOT about possible funding.

Ray Jones and Melissa Laube urged for early action on bump outs for the crosswalk. Howard Muise responded that bump outs could be tested on a temporary basis, and adjacent parking spaces would shadow the bump outs. An added bike lane and buffer would further narrow the crossing length to benefit pedestrians.

TAC will provide a response to the Select Board to update parking signs. Lenard Diggins asked whether Mass DOT needs to be updated about parking in the area. Corey Rateau responded that Mass DOT does not need to be updated as parking on the roadway is controlled by Arlington Police.

Corey Rateau responded to comments regarding speed-limit signs and vehicular speeds on Chestnut St. He said that the default 25-mph limit is for "Thickly Settled" areas unless there is another speed-control sign. Medford St/Route 60 has a speed limit of 35 mph and Chestnut St is 25 mph. Establishing Chestnut St as a 20 mph Safety Zone would require a minimum of a quarter-mile distance.

## **6      Vote: Pedestrian Flags at Chestnut St. Crosswalk at Chestnut Terr.**

Further to the discussion on Chestnut St traffic calming, the Chestnut St Working Group recommended installing pedestrian flags at the

crosswalk at Chestnut Terr. Jeff Maxtutis noted that there are existing sign posts at the crosswalk that could be used to attach pedestrian flag canisters .

Motion to install pedestrian flags at Chestnut Terr crosswalk passed unanimously.

TAC will coordinate with Corey Rateau and DPW on the installation of pedestrian flags at Chestnut Terr crosswalk.

## **7      Update: Thompson School Traffic Calming**

Scott Smith noted that there is busy traffic in the morning school rush despite having approximately half the students attending under hybrid school arrangement. Laura Swan discussed a plan to conduct traffic and pedestrian counts at eight intersections, which will need volunteers (perhaps parents of Thompson School students). She also inquired about traffic data, in particular vehicle speeds on N. Union St and Everett St. She will ask Corey Rateau to schedule data collection.

Scott Smith and Howard Muise inquired whether traffic counts at fewer than the eight intersections could be conducted and used to interpolate traffic counts at other intersections.

Howard Muise recalled that previous traffic and pedestrian counts were conducted at the old Thompson School. Paul Schlichtman remarked that the layout of the new school building likely has dispersed traffic as students and staff can enter the building from both North Union and Everett streets. (Previously, the building had an entrance only on N. Union St.) He added that one-way side streets could help with traffic flow and safety.

## **8      Public Questions**

Joe Solomon asked for updates on the intersection of Appleton St and Park Ave. Howard Muise responded that the TAC determined a signal is warranted at that intersection. The next step is to engage a traffic consultant to assess the Park Ave corridor from Florence Ave to Mass Ave to see how a signalized intersection would affect traffic flow. TAC will inquire with Wayne Chouinard about funds available to retain a traffic consultant for the analysis. The cost is estimated at approximately \$5,000.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 pm.